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Summary

Contents

Contents

2001 Census Field Operations a success!

The 2001 Census - The PR Wrap Up

New Digital Boundaries - coming soon

Mapping the Census - Census maps coming soon

ABS and MapInfo working together on CDATE 2001

Preparing the 2001 Census Community Profile Series

Census Working Papers

2001 Census Customised Tables - Advance Order Service - Closing Soon

The Census Guide - essential Census reference tool

Census at work in a South Australian school

Keeping up with Australia's Social Trends

2001 Census Field Operations a success!

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By Paul Williams, Director Census Development and Field Organisation

The enumeration phase of the 2001 Census has been highly successful. While there were substantial changes to field systems and procedures since the 1996 Census, a further range of improvements are also being identified for the 2006 Census.

Special enumeration procedures – how did they go?

Homeless enumeration procedures, including pilot procedures trialed in 1996, were used nationally for the 2001 Census and included the use of a short form for the absolutely homeless. High level support from organisations dealing with the absolutely homeless, contributed to the excellent response to the census from homeless people. A special procedure to identify houses which were part of the Supported Accommodation Program (e.g. Women's Refuges) during this census was also established, resulting in widespread endorsement by the relevant peak bodies.

An extensive and successful Public Relations campaign ensured the high level support provided by ethnic community leaders for past censuses continued for the 2001 Census. Indigenous enumeration procedures generally worked well. As a result of issues raised concerning counts of Indigenous people from past censuses, special evaluation studies are

planned over the next 18 months. Observations by the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) of the count within three communities in Queensland and the Northern Territory will be analysed. A further study will also be undertaken comparing administrative data sources with census counts.

For the 1996 Census, a demographic analysis of the components of change in the Indigenous population as measured by the census was undertaken. Results were published in **Population Issues, Indigenous Australians**, ABS Occasional Paper, ABS Cat. No. 4708.0. This will be repeated for the 2001 Census.

Census Inquiry Service

The Census Inquiry Service (CIS) handled some 620,000 calls over the census period, well in excess of the 1996 figure. The increased ability to handle callers was due to the extensive use of automated messages and common questions being answered via recorded responses. The Census PR web site was widely used with approximately 46,000 user sessions. Two of the key target groups, the media and schools, were amongst the major users. Thorough evaluation of all aspects of the field operation, including the different organisational models used by Regional Offices is underway.

Public Relations

Field operations were supported by a highly successful PR campaign. At the recent Public Relations Industry Awards for the ACT, the census campaign won the Marketing Communications Award for the set of media resources developed for the campaign, and the multimedia award for the educational CD-ROM 'A Tale of Two Worlds'.

The success of the PR campaign is evident when an independent analysis undertaken post-Census revealed the following interesting results:

- 82% of persons aged 18+ saw, heard or read something about Census in the two weeks prior to census (apart from delivery of Census forms) (68% in 1996);
- 71% agreed that all the information given in the Census would remain confidential (61% in 1996)
- 91% agreed that the information gained from the Census is necessary for government planning (87% in 1996).
- 85% are "for" the Census (79% in 1996); and
- 96% said a census form had been completed for their household (95% in 1996).

The 2001 Census - The PR Wrap Up

The 2001 Census - The PR Wrap Up

More than 9 million households throughout Australia were involved in the 2001 Census of Population and Housing. The planning behind the significant census public relations effort began in earnest more than two years prior to census day.

The Census Communications team was involved in informing the community about:

- when their census form was to be delivered, completed and collected
- the job opportunities

- the topics to be included
- the privacy provisions
- the reasons why Australia needs the census and who is and isn't counted
- the Census Time Capsule Project, and
- the changes that have occurred since the 1996 Census.

Effective mass media coverage was an integral part of the overall communications strategy. While there was always going to be some automatic coverage of key events, like census day, the challenge was to sustain media coverage over a period of weeks. This was achieved by:

- organising displays and community briefings in public libraries
- installing a public information web site (which has now been decommissioned)
- the use of multilingual posters in airports
- placing advertisements on television, radio and in newspapers
- dispatching weekly 'Census News' updates to key stakeholders, and of course
- placing articles of interest in **Census Update**.

The public support for the census was enormous. John Struik, head of the Census Programme, has publicly thanked the community for their cooperation for taking part in the snapshot of Australia. At the same time, Mr Struik has praised the work of approximately 30,000 census field staff.

"I would like to express the ABS' thanks to the combined efforts of the community, our staff, stakeholders and the media for helping the ABS throughout the 2001 Census period," Mr Struik said.

While results from the quality assurance check, the Census Post Enumeration Survey, are still being processed other results are pointing towards a successful 2001 Census.

New Digital Boundaries - coming soon

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With increasing use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for statistical analysis, digital boundaries have become a very important component of the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC). In line with the new Commonwealth Spatial Data Access and Pricing Policy, the ABS has significantly reduced the price of digital boundaries. From the end of January 2002, all ASGC spatial units (except Urban Centres and Localities) will be available on a single CD-ROM, at a cost of \$95.

By dramatically reducing the price of digital boundaries, the ABS is making this fundamental dataset of the Australian Spatial Data Infrastructure more widely accessible. The ABS encourages and supports the use of the ASGC by other organisations to improve the comparability and usefulness of statistics generally.

Boundaries will be in MapInfo interchange format (mid/mif) and will include code and name attributes for every polygon. Urban Centres and Localities will follow later in 2002, after population counts are available from the 2001 Census.

Following the release of ASGC 2001 boundaries, Census specific boundaries, such as postal areas and suburbs, will also be available on CD-ROM for \$95. A new edition of ASGC Historic Boundaries, covering editions from 1996 to 2000, will also be released at the end of April 2002 and will be available at the same price.

Enquiries about Digital Boundaries should be forwarded to the Assistant Director, Area Classification, telephone (02) 62525888, fax (02) 6252 8666 or email geography@abs.gov.au.

Mapping the Census - Census maps coming soon

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A Census Collector's map is not just a navigational tool. It is the definitive description of the area, known as the Collection District (CD), for which the Census Collector takes personal responsibility. He or she must deliver a census form to every household in that area and only in that area.

Production of the 37,209 full colour CD maps was completed in March 2001, five months in advance of the 2001 Census. Most CD maps are in A3 landscape format but approximately 4,000 were printed in A2 size. Another 2,784 smaller scale maps were produced to help Group Leaders manage their Collectors. Maps were produced using the Public Sector Mapping Agency dataset and a highly automated map production system developed by the ABS specifically for the task.

Although CD maps are primarily designed for the collection phase, they will be available for sale to the public from the end of January 2002. However, each CD map depicts only one CD (approx. 220 households) and its immediate surrounds. Anyone working with census data and wanting to understand the areas to which that data relates needs a map showing groups of CDs within their neighbourhood or region. GIS users can of course use digital boundaries for this purpose but for clients who do not have GIS technology, the ABS is currently producing a series of maps which show all the Collection Districts within a Statistical Local Area (SLA). For each SLA, there is a map showing the whole of the area covered by the target SLA. For many SLAs, there are additional mapsheets showing enlargements of more densely populated areas.

Each CD within the SLA is labelled with a seven digit CD code. Also shown on the map are the SLA boundaries and SLA Codes, Local Government Area boundaries and State borders. Topographic features such as roads, rivers, lakes, railways, pipelines, national parks and place names are also displayed. The most convenient method for clients to order small numbers of maps will be via the ABS web site www.abs.gov.au/census from late January 2002 where a map-based ordering system will assist users to locate the SLAs they require and to place an order. Prices are expected to be similar to those charged for 1996 Census maps.

ABS and MapInfo working together on CDATE 2001

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On 30 July 2001, a contract was signed between the ABS and software and technology leader MapInfo Australia for the development of the CData 2001 suite of products. This signalled the start of an important working relationship between the ABS and MapInfo Australia for one of the premier outputs from the 2001 Census.

MapInfo software developers and programmers are now working closely with ABS staff on the testing CData 2001 products to ensure they meet the very highest standards. MapInfo Australia's National Sales Manager, Mr David Ower, said "MapInfo's team of local developers will build the software to graphically interpret the statistics relating to Australian households gathered in the Census. We already have a proven track record as we successfully worked with the ABS during the 1996 Census."

The reports from the first round of testing of CData 2001 are available for CData User Group members on the Group's Information Database. The latest **CData Newsletter** contains more information on the CData User Group. If you are not yet a member of the CData User Group, **register now**.

CData 2001 Full GIS and CData 2001 Quickbuild are scheduled to be released in September 2002, with the second release versions proposed for June 2003.

Preparing the 2001 Census Community Profile Series

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A dedicated Census Output team is working on the finer points of the 2001 Census Community Profile Series. Data in this series has a myriad of applications, and forms the basis of a number of other census products.

The 2001 Census Community Profile Series brings together key census data variables in convenient "packages" of tables - to allow users to get a statistical picture of their community or region of choice. There are six different profiles available.

These profiles are released in predetermined table formats and are ideal for users wanting census data for a particular area. Users can select data for a range of geographic classifications from very small areas such as Statistical Local Areas (SLA) or Collection District for Basic Community Profiles, through to data for the whole of Australia.

The profile series will be released gradually throughout 2002 and 2003. The ABS has provided **templates** of each profile on the ABS web site and potential users are encouraged to view the templates to assess their suitability for their data needs.

Users will be able to select the level of geography and region of interest, and then order the relevant profile from ABS Information Consultants or direct via the ABS web site. Profiles can be provided in hardcopy or electronic format. Electronic profiles will be provided with free software to allow users to manipulate, view, print and export the data.

Free Profiles on the internet!

The entire Basic Community Profile for the main ASGC structure down to SLA level will be available free on the ABS web site as the data is released. The Australian community will be able to readily access a vast amount of census data through easily understood drill down

maps.

Census Working Papers

Census Working Papers

Census Working Papers provide background information on data collection and procedural issues. Their purpose is to contribute to a greater understanding of the data, the processes and procedures that impact upon the final output.

These Working Papers discuss data quality issues that have the potential to affect the interpretation of census results. Issues addressed include: response rates and response patterns to new questions; changes to question design; the impact of processing edits on data output; and the methodological effectiveness of Special Enumeration Strategies.

Census Working Papers provide in-depth information and are best suited to the needs of researchers, academics, consultants, government and international statistical agencies.

As the 2001 Census Working Papers become available they will be included on the Census pages of the ABS web site www.abs.gov.au/census and will be able to be downloaded free of charge.

Interested users may also like to register with census.users@abs.gov.au, which is a free electronic notification service alerting participants to important census related information including product releases.

2001 Census Customised Tables - Advance Order Service - Closing Soon

2001 Census Customised Tables - Advance Order Service - Closing Soon

Once again, the ABS is offering clients the opportunity to pre-order their customised tables from the 2001 Census. By utilising the **Advance Order Service** (AOS), clients are able to determine their requirements while the census data is being processed. ABS Consultants guide and advise clients throughout the process, and enter the specifications into the system once they have been finalised. The AOS allows clients to pre-order and receive their data more quickly once it has been officially released in mid 2002.

While available to all data users, this service is particularly useful for those clients requiring large and complex data matrices.

This service has been extended until 21 December 2001.

If you have not yet finalised your data requirements and would like to take advantage of this service, contact the ABS now. To receive an AOS Information Pack, phone **1800 183 939** or send an email with "AOS" in the subject field to census.users@abs.gov.au. Please include your postal address in the email.

More information on the **Census Table Specification Service** can be found [here](#).

The Census Guide - essential Census reference tool

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To assist users of census data, the ABS has released **The Census Guide** (ABS Cat. No. 2914.0.30.001), a CD-ROM which contains a range of 2001 Census reference material and product information. **The Census Guide** makes it easier to find the required information and is an essential reference tool.

The Census Guide includes:

- Census product indicative release timetable
- **Census Dictionary** (ABS Cat. No. 2901.0)
- **How Australia Takes a Census** (ABS Cat. No. 2903.0)
- **2001 Directory of Census Statistics** (ABS Cat. No. 2910.0)
- Product and service briefs
- Census Information Papers
- **Census Table Specification Service** (CTSS).

The first edition of The Census Guide also contains some free data, including the 1996 Census Selected Characteristics Publications and extracts from the 1996 Census Basic Community Profile, as examples of the type of data that will be available from the 2001 Census.

For a free copy of The Census Guide **call 1800 813 939**.

Census at work in a South Australian school

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The ABS, in conjunction with the Mathematical Association of SA, recently conducted a professional development workshop at the Open Learning Centre in SA.

The workshop was of interest to teachers of Mathematics, Geography, Economics, Accounting, Business Studies and Society and Environment from Years 8-12. Ross Johnson, Education Account Manager at the ABS, presented the workshop and demonstrated a number of very useful and interesting teaching aids. In particular, teachers investigated the new ABS web site, as well as the new census CD-ROM, '**A Tale of Two Worlds**', which introduces students to the hows and whys of the census.

Next year students at the Open Learning Centre will be involved in testing the ABS 'Community Profile' software package in their statistical studies for Years 11 and 12. The package, titled 'CProfile', offers statistical profiles of the suburbs around Australia. Students are able to compare key features of their own suburb with others anywhere else in Australia, as well as data for Australia as a whole.

This hands on experience makes statistics more relevant and enables students to gain a

better understanding of the information collected in the census and how it can be used by government and business.

Keeping up with Australia's Social Trends

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Australian Social Trends 2001 (ABS Cat. No. 4102.0) is a popular and easy-to-understand compendium of articles about current social issues in Australia. As well as the latest statistical information, it provides an analysis of Australian society and how it is changing over time. Complementing the articles are national, state and international summary tables which present key social indicators reflecting Australia's social well-being in a local and global context.

The current edition, includes:

- **Population projections for the 21st century**

Australia's population is projected to grow from 19 million in 1999 to between 23 and 32 million in 2101, depending on the assumptions made about future fertility and net overseas migration. The population is also projected to age rapidly during the first half of the 21st century and to become increasingly concentrated in the State and Territory capital cities.

- **Expenditure in low-income households**

All households have a finite amount of income to divide into a household budget. This report examines expenditure on basic needs, additional goods and services and savings, as well as comparing expenditure for the top and bottom income groups.

- **Caring in the community**

With the trend away from institutionalised care, informal carers such as family members, friends and neighbours are becoming an increasingly important source of assistance to people with a disability. This article addresses the characteristics of carers, their relationship with the recipients of their care, and the impact of caring on people's lives.

To order your copy of Australian Social Trends 2001 call **1800 813 939**.

About this Release

A periodic newsletter to keep clients informed of developments in Census products and services. Highlights recent and forthcoming releases, provides comments on census data and advises of user forums.